JUNGALBOOK

by Edward Mast

Adapted from Rudyard Kipling's
THE JUNGLE BOOKS

Recipient of the
DISTINGUISHED PLAY AWARD
from the
AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR THEATRE AND EDUCATION
(AATE)

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Anchorage Press, Inc.
Anchorage Press Plays, Inc.
Louisville, KY 40201-2901 USA

ISBN 087602-291-3

JUNGALBOOK was first presented by Seattle Project on June 26, 1982, at the Broadway Performance Hall in Seattle, Washington. It was directed by Jim Ballantine, with movement direction by Carmen Paris, set design by Jon Ostrove, and costumes by Ruth Loes. The cast:

Baloo	Ted Senecal
Grab/Hathi	William Stiles
Grey/Kaa	Raymond Houla
Akela	Jamie Angell
Bagheera	Larry Knappert
Skerakhan	Carmen Roman
Mowgli	Mark Johnson
Monkey/ Vulture/Hyena	Steve Kummerer

JUNGALBOOK has also been produced at Stage One in Louisville KY (Moses Goldberg, director), The Coterie in Kansas City MO (Jim Tibbs, director), and the Honolulu Theater for Youth (John Kaufman, director). The play has also been performed by children at high schools and at the Portland Civic Theater in Portland, OR.

THE SET

Jungle bars.

Not a jungle, but a jungle-gym: an arch of monkeybars, say eight feet tall at apex, spreading sideways across the stage. These can be straight and businesslike, real junglegym bars; or they can be tangled and intertwined at odd angles. The structure is fully naked, not decorated by vine or leaf or painted ornament, not representing jungle in any pictorial way.

The other item of scenery is a long frail lightblue fabric, which at rise is absent. This fabric will be unfurled at the proper time by two offstage actors to become the River.

THE ANIMALS

Only humans wear masks, excluding Mowgli. Different animals are suggested by posture and voice. Costumes are playground clothing, grade-school level, with suggestions of jungle: shorts, tennis shoes, etc. with maybe a claw or two.

THE CHARACTERS (groupings are suggested doubling for eight actors)

BALOO the bear

BAGHEERA the panther

SHERAKHAN the tiger

MOWGLI the human boy

AKELA leader of the wolf pack

GRAB a wolf
HATHI the elephant

GREY a wolf
KAA the python

MONKEY
VULTURE
HYENA
BUFFALO

Also: several actors can play HUMANS as well as part of the Elephant. Even though the characters are all referred to as "him's," most of them can be played either male or female, with pronouns changed to match. Mowgli is a boy, and Bagheera seems to me more moving as male; but Sherakhan, for example, was played by a woman in our original production, and the effect was striking. Akela might be a she-wolf, as well, especially since wolf packs are sometimes led by the female.

JUNGALBOOK

(Jungalsounds in the darkness. Roar, monkey's chatter, snarl. Increasing, louder and louder, till the jungal is close and loud. Lights up on the playground of the jungal. Kid-dressed animals, all shapes and sizes, changing shape, all playing childrens' games. Not jumprope or jacks; rather, chasing, tossing, surrounding, scuffling, attacking and defending. One large animal doesn't move quickly. Lumbers toward us, speaks.)

BALOO: To eat in the jungal
ya must kill.
Therefore it's law in the jungal:
Never kill for pleasure.
The Law uv the Jungal is older than I am
and I'm pretty old.
I'm Bahloo the baare.
I teach the Law uv the Jungal to baarcubs, wulfcubs,
all uv'em.
if yoo live as long as me,
yoo will see
none uv these animals survive
without
the Law uv the Jungal.

(A fight breaks out over a prize. Baloo steps over, breaks it up. To the fighters)

BALOO: Law uv the Jungal:
The meat belongs to the killer.
Steal it from him, yoo die.

(Two wolves fight: Baloo breaks them up)

BALOO: Fight if yoo must,
but cat may not kill cat,
nor wulf kill wulf.

(The two wolves obey silently, move apart. A big creature is lurking around: Balloo faces it)

Hunt on your own ground.
Otherwise some may go hungry.

(A human - - masked, with robot movements -- walks across the stage. Animals hide.)

BALOO: *(to us)* Stay clear uv Man.
if yoo kill one man,
men and men and men will return
to murder your people.
seven times over.
Never kill Man,
and never kill for the pleasure uv killing.

(Two wolves -- who will later be Grab and Grey -- are tussling over a small bundle. As they toss and snatch it from each other, it emits baby cries -- made by Mowgli offstage)

BALOO: Wulfs may not -- *(they're not listening; Baloo shakes head wearily)*
Wulfs are slow learners..
(Turns to another wulf who's playing elsewhere)
Akela!

(Akela looks at him: Baloo gestures toward the fight. Akela leaps down, breaks up the scuffle)

AKELA: Hey! Break it up! Cut it!

(Grab and Grey kneel, bend heads to ground)

GRAB: Sorry Akela.

GREY: *(points at Grab)* He stole my meat!

AKELA: *(to Grab)* Put it down. Yoo hear me?

BALOO: Law uv the Jungal:
Obey the leader of the Pack.

(Grab sets bundle down)

AKELA: *(sniffling at bundle)* What kind uv meat is it?

GRAB: Mancub.

AKELA: *(recoils)* Human meat?

GREY: Still alive.

(Akela shiffs at the bundle, nudges it with his paw: a loud baby cry comes from it, making all of them jump back)

GREY: I saw it first.

GRAB: Nun-uh. I saw it.

GREY: I did!

GRAB: I did!

GREY: Me!

GRAB: Me!

(They jump together; Akela shoves them apart. He stares at the bundle, puzzled)

BALOO: Word uv the Leader of the Pack is law,
but the law also says
seven times over, never kill Man.

AKELA: Yeah, yeah.

GRAB: So who gets it, me or him?

AKELA: *(annoyed, confused: cuffs him)* Shuddup for a minute, willya?

(Bagheera appears)

BAGHEERA: Akela.

(Grab and Grey huddle behind Akela as Bagheera the panther approaches, powerful and polite)

BABHEERA: Good hunting, Akela.

AKELA: Good hunting, Bagheera.

BAGHEERA: *(calm, smooth)* I am a panther
and have no right to meddle in
wulf business.
But Jungal Law states that
a hunter's meat may be bought
for a price.
Am I right, Baloo?

BALOO: Bagheera knows the Law.

AKELA: You wanna buy this mancub meat from us?

BAGHEERA: Close by here
is a freshkilled bullllll,
fatter and juicier than this little bundle.
For this price
will the wulpack let the mancub live?

AKELA: Trade a whole big bull for a little mancub?
Sure. Right?

GRAB: Sure! Bull's better than mancub.

GREY: Yoo bet!

AKELA: Yoo got a deal, Bagheera . .

BAGHEERA: Will yoo also
let the mancub run with yoor pack?

AKELA: *(puzzled again)* Yoo want us
to raise the cub?

BAGHEERA: I want the cub to live.
A panther is no animal to
nurse
a cub. You have motherwulfs in your pack
who will care for a humancub.
Will you raise the mancub?

AKELA: *(looks at Grab and Grey, who grumble)*
I dunno about that part --

(snarl offstage)

SHERAKHAN: *(off)* Wheeere's my meeeet!

(Bagheera steps back slightly; wolves pack up behind Akela as Sherakhan the Tiger springs on)

SHERAKHAN: Where is it!

BAGHEERA: Where is what, Sherakhan?

(Sherakhan stops, crouches to fight when he sees Bagheera. But then he sees the bundle)

SHERAKHAN: That's my kill. Get away from it.

AKELA: We're makin a deal here --

SHERAKHAN: *(shoves him away)* Outta my way.

AKELA: *(standing firm before the bundle)*

Hey!
We don't take orders from tigers.
We're makin a deal with the panther
so yoo go mind yoor own
tigerbusiness.

(Sherakhan is wary of Bagheera, who also takes a stance of defense)

SHERAKHAN: That meeet is mine, Bagheera.
That mancub's mother and father
arr in my stomach.

BAGHEERA: *(angry)* You killed the parents?
(stops himself; calm)
Shouldn't eeat Man, Sherakhan.
You'll lose your teeth.

SHERAKHAN: You just back away, Panther.

AKELA: The mancubb belongs to the Freepeople Wulfpack, Sherakhan.
Back away yourself.

SHERAKHAN: Yooo
watch yoor tail, Bushyface.
That meet belongs to me.

AKELA: Bushyface? Bushyface, huh?
Well I
Akela
Leader uv the Freepeople Wulfpack
have accepted Bagheera's bargain
and will take this mancub
to grow up part uv my pack.
That's my word;
my teeth defend it.
And also: *(snaps fingers)*

GRAB: My teeth!

GREY: My teeth!

BAGHEERA: And mine, oh mighty tiger.

SHERAKHAN: *(looks at them all together)* Eeeeeeeeasy talk,
One by one yoor not so brave.

BAGHEERA: Sneak up behind them one by one:
that's yoor way,
brave tiger.

SHERAKHAN: Oooooooh, unbeaten panther.
Afraid for yoor little baby mancub?
Mommy? MommyMommyMommyMommy

(Bagheera's back coils to spring, but the fight is stopped by Baloo's words)

BALOO: Cat my not kill cat
nor wulf kill wulf,
Law uv the Jungal.

(The two cats freeze; slowly Bagheera pulls away)

BAGHEERA: Yoo kill defenseless dangerous Man
and make trouble for the whole Jungal.
I can't punish yoo myself
but I will live to see yoo pay the price.
Go feed on rats and porcupines, Tiger.

SHERAKHAN: I am Sherakhan
and I feed wherever I choose.
That mancub will come to my teeth in the end
when yoo bushtailed thieves grow tired uv toying with it.
Take good care uv him,
mommy Bagheera.

(Tiger springs away and off)

AKELA: Showed that Tiger.

GREY: Do we eat the mancub now?

AKELA: *(punches him)* No, stupid. We get the bull.

GREY: Oh. Yeh.

BAGHEERA: What will you name the mancub?

AKELA: Name? Oh, right.
We'll call him
uh
let's see.
He's got no fur on his skin
so we'll call him
Mowgli.

(Wolves laugh)

BALOO: *(to us)* Means Little Frog.

BAGHEERA: Keep him safe.

AKELA: He's safe as long as I'm leader.

BAGHEERA: Nobody's leader forever.

(Akels stares at him, silent. Then turns away, uncomfortable)

AKELA: So where's this bull?

BAGHEERA: Top uv the hill. Over there.

AKELA: *(tosses his head in gesture to the wolves)* Let's go.

(The wolves leave. Bagheera stops Akela)

BAGHEERA: Akela!

(Akela stops: Bagheera points to bundle)

AKELA: Oh. Yeah.

(Akela picks up bundle awkwardly, leaves to follow wolves)

BALOO: If I were you, Bagheera,
I'd keep one eye on that wulfpack
and that little frog.

BAGHEERA: I'm not a mother for cubs! *(pause)*
But I will watch.
Will you teach him the Law?

BALOO: I'll teach him, till he grows and returns to Man.
Time will come, if I know humans,
for that little Frog Mowgli
to teach that tiger some manners.
He may even be some help to yoooo
someday.

BAGHEERA: Nobody helps Bagheera.

(Bagheera springs away.
Baloo, alone, turns to us)

BALOO: Seasons pass by quick
to an old baare
like me.
As many years as *(holds up hand)*
toes on my paws
pass by me like nothin.
But this many years
are plenty
for a prime wulf
even a wulf leader
to get old and get slow.

(Grab and Grey enter, hunting. Akela enters with them; but when Grab and Grey scurry across and off, Akela stops, panting and tired. He walks after them.)

BALOO: And this many years to a
little human kid
well
that's his whole life,
enuff years to grow up from baby frog to
Mowgli the Mancubb,
walkin on two feet like a human
or a baare.
Nuff years for him to learn
all the special ways uv the Jungal,
all the language uv
batsplash, grassrustle, footprint,
all the slow secret signals uv the Jungal --

(Mowgli has entered behind Baloo, silent and crouching; he now jumps up, screeching "CAW" in Baloo's ear. Baloo whirls around ready for battle with some great pteradoctyl. Mowgli laughs uproariously)

BALOO: Mowgli!
How many times have I tooooold yooo
the Jungal is no place for playing at danger?

MOWGLI: As many times as there are nutts on the palm tree.

BALOO: I've squashed bigger creatures than yoo
for less uv a scare.

MOWGLI: Yoo deserve it
for making me,
King uv the Jungal,
spend all morning listening to yoor silly old
junnnnngalll Laaaaaaws.

(enter Perchy the Monkey, chased by Grab and Grey. Mowgli leaps to join them. Mowgli and the three wolves surround Perchy, who tries to escape, but the delighted wolves and Mowgli taunt him fiercely, dancing round in a ring.)

BALOO: Mowgli - - *(sighs: to us)*
And of course,
he has pleanty of time to play with his packmates
the wulfs.

GRAB & GREY & MOWGLI: Monkeeface Monkeeface
uggllee you!
Bull butt stinks
and yoo doo too!

(Perchy tries to get away, but Grey blocks him and Mowgli imitates his funny walk. Wolves laugh. Perchy tries to run: Mowgli imitates)

GRAB & GREY & MOWGLI: Monkeeface Monkeeface
ugggleee yoo
Snakes are skinny
and yoo arr too!
Monkeeface Monkeeface
ugggggleeee yoo
Spiders got long arms
and yoo doo too!

(Perchy waves arms and shouts, trying to scare them; wolves recoil slightly, but Mowgli imitates and the wolves scream with laughter. Baloo shakes head wearily, lumbers toward them)

BALOO: Awwwwwwllllright.
Leave him alooooooone.

MOWGLI: We're just havin fun!

BALOO: Perchy, go way.

(Perchy the Monkey hops away; stops, gives a raspberry to wolves, exits fast. Wolves bark but Baloo silences them)

BALOO: Yoo got nothin better to do?

GREY: Better than listnin to fatt bayerrrrrs --

BALOO: *(to Gray)* Now listen, Grab - -

GREY: I'm Grey!

GRAB: I'm Grab!

GREY: He's Grab!

BALOO: Whichever. This fatt old bayer
has fat old paws, so careful
with yoor loose tongue.
Hear me?

GRAB: Yeh, yeh.

GREY: Sure sure.

BALOO: Go play. Play good.

(Grab and Grey run off. Mowgli starts to follow.)

BALOO: Mowgli!

MOWGLI: Whaaaat?

BALOO: Not so fast. Ya got lessons to learn.

MOWGLI: Awwww!
More stupid old Jungal words?

BALOO: Yoo gotta learn

yoor too small to go
tantalizing monkees.

MOWGLI: Aww, Perchy the Monkee's just silly and stinky.

BALOO: Monkey can bite just like everybody.

MOWGLI: *(pointing off)* Grab and Grey getta go play.
How come I gotta sit arownd reciting yoor old lessons?

BALOO: Grab and Grey got wulfteeth and wulf claws.
Yoo have mancub babyteeth and no claws.
I teech yoo Masterwoords
for yoor own safety.

MOWGLI: What's a mancub?

BALOO: Yoo.

MOWGLI: *(clambering about on the bars)* Aaa! I'm a wulf.
I run as fast as any wulf,
I climb better than I run,
I swim better than I climb;
wulf like me got nothing to be safe from.

BALOO: The jungal will teech yoo feeer
someday.

MOWGI: Jungal's my playgrownd.
What's 'feeer'?
I don't know that word 'Feeeeer'.

BALOO: You should feer this jungal.
The rain is late this year.
Jungal gets dry, food gets scarce,
tempers get brittle as sticks.
If that tiger Sherakhan catches you alone
you'll learn feeeer real quick.

MOWGLI: Stupid old tiger. I'll stare in his eyes.
Like this.
(stares in Baloo's eyes. Baloo must turn away.)

BALOO: Yoo have
human eyes.

MOWGLI: Nobody meets my eyes.
Not yoo,
not Akela,
not Sherakhan.
That's why I'm the biggest best wulf
and I'll have my own pack someday
and do whatever I want
all day long.
Mowgli, Ruler uv the Jungal!

Baloo: Is that what yoo arr?
Well Baloo wishes to speak with yoo,
O Master uv Birdnests.

(Baloo has walked to the bottom of the tree where Mowgli is climbing. He now gives it a solid rap with his fist: the tree shivers and shakes; Mowgli loses balance, topples, fall tumbling to the ground at Baloo's feet. Baloo picks him up by the ear)

BALOO: Jungal is wide,
and yoo
are tiny.
Jungal is mighty,
yoo
arr weak.
Jungal is thick,
yoo
thin.
Jungal is full uv creatures
could swallow yoo
without chewing.

Does Mowgli hear?

MOWGLI: *(sulky and bruised)* I hear.

BALOO: Yoo will learn feeer
soon enuff.
Meanwhile
I teach yoo Masterwoords so yoo
can stay alive.
What arr the Masterwoords?

MOWGLI: One blood,
yoo and me.

BALOO: *(lets go his ear)* Good.
Mowgli is wise and learns quick. *(ruffIles the boy's hair)*
And why do I teach yoo the woords?

MOWGLI: 'Cause Mowgli is tiny
while Jungal is wide.

BALOO: Correct.

MOWGLI: Mowgli is week
while jungal is mighty.

BALOO: Correct.

MOWGLI: Mowgli is thin
while Baloo is fat.

(Baloo looks at him, raises paw to cuff him; Mowgli covers head. Baloo lowers paw. Mowgli uncovers, signs with relief: thus is offguard when Baloo cuffs him gently: just enough to send Mowgli rolling across the ground smack into the treebottoms. Bagheera appears)

BAGHEERA: Baloo.

(Baloo stops. Mowgli rubs his head)

BAGHEERA: *(calm, detached)* Is the mancub some
coconut
to bat abaaaowt
with yoor flat feet?

BALOO: We cannot spoil the boy, Bagheera.
He must learn the law uv the Jungal . . .

BAGHEERA: *(gently scornful)*
Oooooh, naaaaow, how can his little head carry
awwwwll your looooooong talk?

BALOO: Is anyone too little to be killed?
No. So I teach him strict,
so I discipline him,
veeeeery softlee,
when he forgets.

BAGHEERA: *(chuckling)* Where did you learn 'softly'
old Ironfeet?
He's battered head to foot by yoor 'softly'.
The boy is no treetrunk to
sharpen your blunt claws upon.

BALOO: He will remember and thank me someday.

MOWGLI: If I live.

BAGHEERA: Are you in one piece, Mancub?

(Mowgli is silent, uncertain)

BALOO: Yoo may speak, Mowgli.
Yoo know Bagheera the Panther?

MOWGLI: I have seen Bagheera.

I have heard that Bagheera
never misses his hunt.

BAGHEERA: *(chuckles)*
Well I don't hunt mancubbs
tonight, so have no fear.

MOWGLI: *(stands)* That 'fear' again.
What is feeer? Will you tell me?

BAGHEERA: *(pauses)* Yoo'll find it. Soon enough.

(Chil the Vulture screeches on overhead)

CHIL: Yaaa! Yaaa!
Draaaaaoooowt!
Yaa! Yaa!

BALOO: What are yoo screeeeeeeeeching abowt, Vulture?

CHIL: *(hopping about, rather happily)* No rain! Drought!
No rain!
Jungal people thirsteeeee!
Chil the vulture feeeds well!

MOWGLI: What's drought?

BALOO: Waterholes dry up,
food gets scarce,
we all get hungry
and Chil that vulture gets happy.

CHIL: Draaaaaaoowwt!

BALOO: *(to Bagheera)* Come to the River with us?

BAGHEERA: I will be there. *(Bagheera exists)*

BALOO: All the Jungal obeys this one law, Little Frog.

And it is not a pretty sight.

(Baloo and Mowgli exit. Chil continues to shout)

CHIL: Pritty for Chil! Pritty for Chil!
Lotsa food for Chil!
No water, no eating for everyone else,
everyone starves,
lotsa food for Chil!
Pritty for Chil!
Pritty for Chil!

(As Chil speaks, the long lightblue fabric of the River unfurls across the stage. At first it ripples high, then settles, till it barely moves, till it lies flat and motionless. Chil inspects the river)

CHIL: *(hopping, happy)* River all dry!
All mud!

(Enter Akela leading Grab and Grey. Akela is older, slower, wearier. Chil screeches at them)

CHIL: Yaa! Chil feeeds! Yaa!

AKELA: Get outta here, Chil.

CHIL: Ooooooold Akela! Yaa!
See how long you live in drowwt,
oooold and tired Akela!
Yaa! Yaa!

(Akela gestures: Grab and Grey bark and jump at Chil, who flurries away and exits)

GRAB: Showed him.

AKELA: Shuttup and drink.

(Akela laps at the river. Grab looks at Grey; they kneel and drink. Baloo and Mowgli have entered.)

BALOO: The River's fallen. Drying up.
Summer heeet will turn owr green jungal black
and we awl go hunnngry.
Time for Water Truce.

GRAB: Whatsatt?

AKELA: *(punches him quiet)* Shh! Lissen.

BALOO: Until the rayne comes again,
anyone can drink at this river
free from harm.
While the Truce lasts,
to kill any animal beside this river
will be punisht
by death.

AKELA: Everbody hear that?

GRAB: Sure.

GREY: Yeh. Swell.

MOWGLI: Do all the meat eeters really follow this
troooce?

BALOO; Everyone's thirsty:
everyone obeys.

AKELA: Ugly time, Little Frog,
We all gotta watch for ourselves,
so yoo be careful.
First to drop are ones like yoo,
small and weak.

GRAB: And hairless.

GREY: And skinny.

(Grab and Grey laugh. Akela frowns)

MOWGLI: I'll get by.
Maybe I'll just staaare the river in the eye.
Like this:

(He stares at Grab, then at Grey: both must turn their eyes away from his. They growl.)

MOWGLI: Till the water comes back.

(Enter Sherakhan. Behind the tiger, a giggling hyena)

SHERAKHAN: Staaare in my eyes, Manling.

(Wolves tense, pack together)

SHERAKHAN: Look in my eyes and see if
you'll live.

HYENA: Yeh yeh staare in his eyes. Yeh yeh yeh.

BALOO: We're under the Water Truce here, Sherakhan.

SHERAKHAN: Good hunting
to the teeeeecher uv the law.
Good hunting to the Freepeeple wulfpack.

(Hyene punctuates with laugher)

And especially to Akela, leader uv the pack.
How is your limp, Akela?
How is your naked mancub?

MOWGLI: I'm a wulf.

HYENA: Mancub's a wulf! Hahahahahahaha

SHERAKHAN: Well yoo're safe by this river, little wulfee.
Leave this river, though . . .

(Sherakhan flexes claws, staring at Mowgli)

HYENA: An I get the scraps! Hahaha!
(hopping toward Mowgli)
I get all yoor scraps.
How do yoo taste? Heee heehee

(tries to lick/bite Mowgli.
Akela, who has been growling, steps in, kicks the hyena over on his back)

AKELA: Grubby foot-licking hyena.
(Hyena cowers, whimpers as Akela stands over him)

AKELA: Mowgli's in my pack.
Yoo go follow yerrr mangy tigerr
and keep cleer uv Mowgli
and me.

BALOO: *(quiet, urgent)* Akela. Cool off.

AKELA; Pick yer friends better, Tiger.
Hyeena stinks.

SAHERAKHAN; Hyena's got doggie smell. Just like yoo. *(advances on Akela, pushes him)*

SHERAKHAN; Wanna pick on meee
instead uv hyeeena? Huh?

(pushes Akela again, who looks away, tense: used to figting back, but unsure and hesitant. Hyena picks himself up, starts giggling)

AKELA: Don't to that.

BALOO: Water truce, Sherakhan.

SHERAKHAN; Nobody's killing heer.
Arrrr we, Akela?

(pushes him again. Sherakhan advances; Akela backs away, avoids, trying to cool it off)

SHERAKHAN: Arrr we, oold limpwulf?

AKELA: *(furious, ready to spring but frightened)* Eennnnnnuff!

SHERAKHAN; Nuff what, Mancub likker?

AKELA: We're at the River.

SHERAKHAN: Ho ho.
Yer brayve by the truceriver.
I'll meet yoo
anywhere yoo like, Bushfoot.
And then I'll meet yoor little pet Mancub.

AKELA: *(fierce growl)* Nuff!

SHERAKHAN: Stop me. *(Akela growls, desperate; Sherakhan keeps advancing. Suddenly Akela stops, stands his ground, is about to spring. Bagheera has appeared behind them.)*

BAGHEERA: *(calm; cleaning himself)* Heeet
makes everyone nervous.
Doesn't it, Sherakhan.

(Sherakhan whirls to face Bagheera. Grab and Grey appear frightened of the panther. Akela only slowly relaxes. Bagheera lounges forward slowly)

BALOO: *(relieved)* Good hunting, Bagheera.

BAGHEERA; Good hunting, Bahloo.
Good hunting, Sherakhan.
Do yoo evrrrr hunt anyone
yoor own size?

(Bagheera is face to face with Sherakhan. Silence: the two cats do not take eyes off each other. Finally Sherakhan steps back, snorts, chuckles)

SHERAKHAN: I'm hungry.
Got no more time to play.
But yoo and that crusty wulf
can't watch that manboy forever.

HYENA; An I'll get the scraps!

(Sherakhan cuffs him silent; starts to go, turns back)

SHERAKHAN: That bull
that paid for this boy's life
tenn yeeeers back
is long since eaten
If any wulfs get hungry,
I usually have food to spaaare
at my meals
Anyone come with me?

(Grab and Grey look at each other, start to follow the tiger. Akela cuts them off, facing Sherakhan)

AKELA: Not a chance.
We aren't hyenas
to pick at your scraps.

(Sherakhan looks at him, at the wolves; the hyena starts to laugh, and the tiger joins in. They exit, laughing. Grab and Grey grumble)

AKELA: Lucky for that tiger
we're at this river.
Let's go.

(Starts to walk off opposite. Grab and Grey don't move. Akela stops, turns to them. Furious)

AKELA: Let's go!

(Grab and Grey hesitate, then follow Akela, who stomps off)

MOWGLI: I don't understand.
I don't understand.
What's Sherakhan got so much against me?

BALOO: Look at yourself in the water
and yoo'll see.

MOWGLI: I've seen what I look like. *(he looks at his reflection anyway.)* Lotsa times.

BALOO: Then don't you see
ya got no fur? No claws? No fangs?
Yoo arr no wulf?

(Mowgli is staring down at the River, puzzled as though seeing something strange)

MOWGLI: I'm just different looking, is all.

BALOO: Yoo have fingers.
Yoo stand on feet like me.

MOWGLI: *(trying to laugh it off)* What am I? A bayer?

BALOO: Told yoo already.
Yoo were born human
and the tiger hates all humans.
Yoo're only alive in the jungal

because yoor life was bought from the wulf pack
for a just-killed bull.

MOWGLI: Who killed the bull?

BAGHEERA: *(cuts Baloo off)* Doesn't matter.
That's long past.

MOWGLI: *(looking at him)* Thanks for sticking up for Akela.

BAGHEERA: *(quickly)* I don't protect wulfs.
(then more slowly) Sherakhan's a bully.
Hunts cattle and slow little animals
Smaller than himself. A coward.
Got catblood like me
so I don't like watching him
bully old wulfs and little mancubs.
That's all.

MOWGLI; You're right.
Sherakhan's all talk. Big wulf like me . .

BALOO: Yoo're not a wulf.

MOWGLI: Big old BAYER like me,
I'll just staare in his eyes, he'll run away
biting his tayle.
Ha! Let'im pick on me some time.
(he starts to walf off, lumbering like Baloo)

BALOO: Where're yoo goin?

MOWGLI: Gonna teach lessons to the pack.

BALOO: Don't go alone.
Sherakhan's still around.

MOWGLI: So? Think I can't handle that notooth bully?

BALOO: Doo what I tell yoo.

BAGHEERA: Let him go, Baloo.

(Baloo glares at Bagheera)

BAGHEERA: Mowgli is Ruler uv the Jungal.
He can walk where he pleases.

(Mowgli sticks his tongue out at Balco, turns, lumbers off like a bear. Baloo turns to Bagheera with exasperation)

BALOO: Yoo spoil him. This is dangerous.

BAGHEERA: He's just a cub. Why not let him play?

BALOO: Just a cub, and the tiger nearby.

BAGHEERA: He is watched.
Been safe these ten years.
Why arr yoo all uv a sudden afraid?

BALOO: Akela's old, gonna miss his kill one time soon
and those wulfs will turn on him.
They'll forget yoor bargain
and leave nothing between Mowgli and Sherakhan.

BAGHEERA: Nothing but me.

BALOO: Even yooo
can't protect him forever.
(pause) What do you keep this secret?

BAGHEERA: I am not one to nurse cubs.

BALOO; This cub believes the whole jungal is safe for him.
He's gotta know who guards him
and who's been guarding him.
I'll tell him if you want.

BAGHEERA: No.
Don't yooo
tell him.

(Bagheera leaves, running after Mowgli. Baloo shakes his head, grumbles to himself as he exits. The River furls up and away. When it's gone, enter the wolves, Grab, Grey, and Akela, playing, jumping, pawing, cavorting)

GRAB: Why do we gotta keep with that Littllllle Frog?

GREY: Get Sherakhan all mad at us.

AKELA: The pack made a promise, that's why.
Beforr yoo were born.

GREY: Bet yoo were there, hun?

GRAB: Beforr we were born.

GREY: Yer old enuff.

(Grab and Grey laugh. Akela is stung: covers it by attacking into them playfully. They scuffle and yelp with delight. Enter Mowgli, lumbering and rolling like Baloo. Speaks in low Baloovoice)

MOWGLI: Hullooo. I'm Mowwwwgli the bayer!

(He jumps in, roaring like a bear. They scuffle and laugh, till suddenly Grab and Grey step away. Slowly they begin to circle and chant, with Akela standing by, annoyed)

GRAB & GREY: Mannncubb
Mannncubb
uggggleee yoo
Pigs arrr naked
and yoo arr too.

(Mowgli laughs uncertainly; is worried by their growling ferocity)

GRAB & GREY: Manncubb Manncubb
ugggggleee yoo
Birdies arr toothless
and yoo arrr too.
Mannncubb Manncubb
uggggggleeee yoo
Humans arrrr stinky
and so arrrrrr yoo!

AKELA: *(steps in)* Nuff. Knock it off.

(Grab and Grey hesitate; till Grey starts circling Akela. Grab joins in)

GREY: Kela Kela
oooold yoo
Buffaloes limp
and yoo doo too

AKELA: (restrained) Hey . . .

GREY & GRAB: Kela Kela
oooold yoo
Deer walk backwards
and yoo doo too
Kela kela
ooooooooooold yooo
Oldies get hurt
and yoo will tooo!

(Grab and Grey scream with laughter, run off. Akela stands, shaken. Mowgli approaches, touches him)

MOWGLI: Why'd they do that?

AKELA: *(shakes him off)* Get away, willya.

(Pause. Akela lowers head. Mowgli sulks)

MOWGLI: Thought I wuz one uv the pack:

AKELA: Yoo're just young.
Like them.
Tiger makes'em strange,
say stuff they don't
mean.

MOWGLI: Tiger's after me, not them.

AKELA: Nobody gets yoo while
I'm around.

MOWGLI: *(pauses)* Would I be in yoor pack even if
I wasn't a wulf?

AKELA: *(looks at him, chuckles wearily)* Even if yoo were a tigercub.
Flatface.
(shoves his head playfully) Wulf keeps a promise.
No big deal.

(Akela looks at Mowgli; then turns, follow wolves. Mowgli sits, sulks. Perchy the Monkey enters behind him. Walks up, staring at Mowgli. Mowgli notices)

MOWGLI: Get away.

(Monkey stares. Dances around Mowgli. Mowgli scowls. Monkey sits beside Mowgli, imitating scowl and sulk. Mowgli turns glaring at the monkey. Monkey imitates, glaring back. Mowgli stands threatening; monkey stands threatening back. Mowgli roars; monkey screeches. Mowgli shoves; monkey shoves back. Mowgli beats fists on the ground; monkey likewise. Monkey imitates Mowgli's every action until suddenly Mowgli stops, stands, listening. Pulls the Monkey with him and

they climb up behind trees to watch.

Enter Sherakhan the Tiger, strolling, looking about. Stops, pauses; listens. Smells something. Mowgli and the monkey are very still.

Enter opposite, Grab, running from some fast game. He almost collides with the Tiger.)

SHERAKHAN: Good hunting.

GRAB: *(freezes with panic)* Good hunting Sherakhan.

SHERAKHAN: *(lounging catlike)* Rellllllaaaaaax.
I'm not hunting
young wooooooolves . . .
right now.

GRAB: Good thing.

SHERAKHAN; Though I do wonder how
such fine hunters as you Freepeepul
are content to be led by a
dying old wulf -- what's his name? --
and a hairless mancub.

GRAB: Akela is pack leader.

SHERAKHAN: I hear that even
Akela yoor old leader
cannot look this manling in the eyes.

(Grab growls, nods)

SHERAKHAN: Does this manling
beloooooong
in the Jungal?
With his fingers
and staaaaaaaring eyes

and furless skin?
Is he one uv us?
Arrr therr no brayve wooooolves
to tayke
back
the pack
from this naked Manboy?

GRAB: He grew up with us.
Akela protects him, is all.

SHERAKHAN: Akela protects him,
while Akela's alive.

(Monkey's getting bored with being silent; he's been hanging by one hand. He slips, catches himself, laughs briefly before Mowgli can slap a hand over his mouth. Sherakhan looks up, but cannot see them through the trees. Silence. Grab takes this opportunity to turn away, but Sherakhan notices)

SHERAKHAN: Wait.

(Grab freezes)

SHERAKHAN: I have fed full tonight
on a large buck
Come with me.
I will take yoo too it
and you can feed with me.
And we'll talk
about Akela
and about a leader for yoor Pack.

(Sherakhan starts to walk off, turns, looks at Grab. Grab looks around, follows. Sherakhan lifts a paw to pat Grab's head; Grab pulls away. Sherakhan smiles, leaves. Grab follows. Mowgli makes sure they're gone before letting go the monkey, who chatters angrily. Mowgli climbs down, stares after the wolf and the tiger.)

MOWGLI: *(holds up hand, looks at it)* Stupid ugly fingers.
Ugly crummy bare skin.
Why do I have to look like this!

(He's clenching his fist, furious. Monkey imitates. Mowgli notices.)

MOWWGLI: Yoo have others who look like yoo?

(Monkey doesn't understand)

MOWGLI: Thought I did. I guess
I was wrong.

(Mowgli looks sad. Monkey mimics sadness. Mowgli giggles. They begin to mimic each other, ending by pulling tails and hair, laughing and chattering. Enter another behind them, moving sinuously and silently until he is just behind them. Sets out a long hiss. He is Kaa the Python)

KAA: YYyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaasssssssssssss

(Mowgli and Monkey turn to see him)

MOWGLI: Rock snake!

(They dive for the trees. Kaa follows them with eyes, calm)

KAA: Sssssstayy yoo sssssssssso!

(Mowgli and monkey freeze, looking at Kaa. Kaa holds their gazes with his eyes, moves slowly toward them.)

KAA: Kaa ssss seeeeees
Kaa seeeeeees
hayyyyyrrlesssss monkeeeee
Kaa feeeeeeeds

(Mowgli and monkey are hypnotized, as Kaa moves in. Enter Bagheera behind the snake)

BAGHEERA: Good hunting, Bagheera.

(The moment is enough for the monkey to snap out and scurry away. Mowgli shakes his head, but Kaa looks back and hypnotizes him)

KAA: Ssstay!

MOWGLI: *(in the instant of consciousness)* One Blood,
yoo and mee.

(Kaa stops, stares at him, puzzled)

KAA: Whaaat monkeee is thisss
who speeeeks massssterrr woooords?

BAGHEERA: No monkey, Kaa
A friend uv mine.

KAA: Friend uv Bagheera?
This creature isss noo catt.

BAGHEERA: This is the manncubb, Kaa.
Ward uv the Freepeepul wulfpack.

KAA: Aaaah!
Ward uv Bagheera.
Kaaa knoooows.

BAGHEERA: Must be
good hunting elsewhere,
Kaa.

AA: I spaare this mancub
for his massssstrrr woords.
That other monkee

is not passst my chase.
But have caaaaare, manling.
Kaa feeeds on monkeeees
whoo look
like
yoo.
Kaa seeeeeeees
Kaa knooooooooooooooooooooowwwwwwssssssssssssss

(Kaa moves off after the monkey.)

MOWGLI: Good hunting, Kaa.
Somewhere else.

BAGHEERA: Kaa will feed well enough.
No monkey survives the stare uv the python.
What did you see in his eyes, Little Frog?

MOWGLI: *(looks at Bagheera, then away; shudders)* Feeer.

(Pause. Jungalsounds.)

MOWGLI: You saved my life.

BAGHEERA: The Masterwoords saved yoo - -

MOWGLI: Yoo saved me.
I'm lucky yoo were here.

BAGHEERA: *(considers saying something, decides against it)*
Yoo should be more careful.

MOWGLI: Baloo taught me
always repay a favor.
Don't know how a little guy like me
can pay back a life to Bagheera the Panther.

*(Mowgli reaches out tentatively to touch Bagheera's back.
Bagheera pulls away, awkward)*

BAGHEERA: I didn't ask for payment. *(pause)*
I am not one to be
petted.

MOWGLI: *(thinks, then smiles)* I wasn't gonna pet.
It's just that
most uv my friends in the jungal
can't quite reach back to scratch the
itch
they get
right here -- I'll show yoo--
right here between the shoulderblades.
But I have these. *(holds up hand)*
maybe these ugly fingers uv mine can
be some good.

BAGHEERA: *(cautious)*
I have
had
an itch
there . . .

(Mowgli reaches back; Bagheera warily lets him scratch his back near the neck. Bagheera is tense at first, but quickly relaxes, lounges, even purrs and stretches at the scratching. Howl offstage. Bagheera coils up)

BAGHEERA: I smell the tiger.

(Bagheera leaps off into the jungal; opposite, Grab scrambles on, watching behind him. Mowgli confronts him)

MOWGLI: Grab!

GRAB: (whirls) Whaddya want?

MOWGLI: Been talking to Sherakhan, have ya?

GRAB: What about it?

MOWGLI: Hyeeenas talk to him, too.

GRAB: Get outta heer, Goggle-eyes.
Yoo're no part uv the jungal,
furless funnyface manbaby.
Go back to yoor human village
where yoo belong.

(behind Grab, enter a tired or wounded buffalo, groaning)

GRAB: Beat it, manbaby!

MOWGLI: What for?

(Mowgli is pushed aside by Grey entering opposite. With him is Akela)

GREY: Heeer it is! The buffalo! Heer, Akela!

GRAB : Stand back for Akela!
Leader uv the Pack, show yoor stuff!

(Mowgli steps away, inconspicuous. Akela is puzzled and confused, looking at Grab and Grey)

GRAB: We saved this kill for yoo.

AKELA: Why'd ya do that?

GREY: Get him!
Arr yoo still
Leeeeder? Spring, Akela!

(Akela, flustered and confused, crouches and springs on the buffalo, which bellows. As he does so, Sherakhan steps onstage behind the buffalo)

SHERAKHAN: Steal my kill, Akela?

(Claws out, Sherakhan cuffs Akela powerfully across the face, sending the wolf sprawling on his back, badly hurt. Sherakhan moves at him)

SHERAKHAN: Jungal law forbids that. Yoor punishment --

AKELA: *(trying to pull himself up)* Wulfs! Defend me!

(Grab and Grey stand stock still. Akela looks looks at them. The buffalo has escaped)

SHERAKHAN: Defend yoorself, dead wulf.

MOWGLI: Ambush cowards! *(he jumps out, tries to pull Akela away)*
Akela, get away from here --

AKELA: *(shoves Mowgli aside)* Outta my way.
I'm no dog
like them.
All I need is one bit at yoor throat --

(he swipes weakly at Sherakhan, who cuffs him down again)

SHERAKHAN: Gooood!
Dead wulf and manboy,
both in one meal.

(Bagheera springs on, flinging Sherakhan down, standing over him poised to kill the Tiger with one blow)

BAGHEERA: *(agonized and furious)* Yoo sicken me.
Yoo make me ashamed.
Make stupid young wulfs betray their leader
so yoo can sneak up on one who's dying.
Is there no
coward snake-thing
yoo won't do?

(Bagheera will kill him; but stops, hesitates; lowers paw just slightly. The Tiger sees the chance: hurls himself against Bagheera's side; the panther falls back, the tiger leaps up; the two cats face off like two Karate masters)

SHERAKHAN: Agayn
and agayn
yoo keep me from my meat.
The buffalo was my kill. I'll catch it,
and let yoo protect yoor wooooolfes,
O untamed Bagheera.
But watch yoor mancub closely.
I taste him;
my teeth sharp at the feel uv his flesh.
Ride on this panther's back now,
boy.

If I meet yoo alone,
truce or not truce,
yoo will end where yoo should have begun.

(Sherakhan roars, exits)

GRAB: (innocent) Is Akela hurt?

(Mowgli screams, hurls himself at the wolves, who run off; he starts to follow, but Akela, who has pulled himself up partially, moans and crumples. Mowgli runs to him)

MOWGLI: I saw them plant the trap.
I saw it. I'm stupid and blind . . .

AKELA: Good thing yoo didn't
fight the tiger for my sake.
We'd both be gone, instead uv
just me.

MOWGLI: Yoo're not hurt that bad.

AKELA: Long time
since the old days uv
mancub
rolling naked in the dust.

MOWGLI: I'm a wulf.
No fault uv mine I was born human.
I'm one skin with the Freepeeple wulfpack.

AKELA: Wulfpack
is no wulfpack.
They follow the Tiger.
Lick his hindpaws.
Eat his scraps.
Led me to his ambush.
This hunting is ended
Yoo arr human.
Go to mann.

MOWGLI: I won't go.
I'll hunt along in the jungal.

AKELA: Can yoo help me up,
Little Brother?
I was Leader uv the Pack
when the wulfs
were
a pack.

(Mowgli helps him to his feet. Baloo has entered behind)

AKELA: Feet in the dark that leave no mark
Silent blow uv paw
This is the hour uv pride and power
Talon Tooth Claw
Hear my call: Good Hunting All
that keep the Jungal Law!

(He leaps in the air, falls limp to the ground. Mowgli touches

him)

BAGHEERA: Good hunting, Akela.

BALOO: Good hunting, Akela. *(pauses)*
I heard the ruckus.
Is this Sherakhan's work?

(Bagheera nods.)

MOWGLI: By my small and weak and clawless hands
I swear
Sherakhan will pay for this.

BALOO: Mowgli.
Yoo must decide now.

MOWGLI: *(still kneeling to hold Akjela)* Decide what?

BALOO: Akela
can't protect yoo anymore.
All yoor protectors willl be gone
some night.
Yoo can wait for Sherakhan to catch yoo
alone.
Yoo can hide, or run to some other Jungal,
or run to the manvillage.
Or yoo can face Sherakhan.
What will yoo do?

MOWGLI: Why do I
have to face the Tiger?

BALOO: Tiger wants yoo dead --

MOWGLI: *(to Bagheera)* Sherakhan ambushed Akela.
Yoo are Master.
Can't yoo punish Sherakhan?

BAGHEERA: Me?

MOWGLI: Kill him.

BAGHEERA: *(stunned)* Me kill Sherakhan?

BALOO: *(shaking head)* Mowgli,
don't you see Bagheera?
Don't yoo see Sherakhan?
Panther and tiger,
they are the same kind.

BAGHEERA: I can fight Sherakhan,
I can defend yoo from his teeth,
but kill him?

BALOO: It is against the Law.

MOWGLI: Aren't yoo Master uv the Jungal?

BALOO: Not uv the Law.

BAGHEERA: The Law is my master. And yoors.

MOWGLI: *(bowing head)* Leave me alone then.
My last friend is gone
and I'm alone.

BALOO: Mowgli --

MOWGLI: Noone left to defend me.
Let Sherakhan ambush me. Let him catch me alone --

BALOO: *(roaring)* Stop it!
Yoo're too old to insult
yoor true guardian.

(Bagheera has turned his back)

BALOO: Akela was not yoor only protector.
There is another
who has watched yoo closely
from the day yoo were born.
He has kept yoo from trouble
and given yoo
yoor life
more times than yoo or I can count.
He would never tell yoo
but Akela is gone
and yoo must know
who has guarded yoo ever since he
bought yoor life
for the price uv a bull
ten yeers back.

Mowgli: *(lookes at Bagheera, who stands unmoving with his back turned)* But I never hardly saw yoo.

BAGHEERA: *(slowly)* I smell
and I hear
farther than yoo can see.

BALOO: The Jungal is careful uv whatever Bagheera protects.

(Mowgli rises, appraoches Bagheera)

MOWGLI: *(softly)* All my life?

(Bagheera turns, raises head, bends back to show his neck)

BAGHEERA: What dyoo see here?

MOWGLI: *(peering)* A spot without fur. What is that?

BAGHEERA: The mark uv a collar.
Only Baloo
and now yoo
have seen it.

I was born
in
the cages uv the King's Palace at Oodyepoor.
My mother was trapped in the jungal
by men using the stranglevine
which they call rope.
I was raised with this
rope
around my neck.
fed with an iron pan in a cage.
When I grew
I felt my strength
and bit the vine in two with my jaw.
I returned
and became most terrible in the Jungal.
Am I not, Baloo?

BALOO: All the Jungal fears Bagheera.

BAGHEERA: Terrible and
alone.
Yoo are like me,
Little Frog.
I grew up like yoo
alone
and different
in a world uv strange creatures.
The humans fed me and cared for me,
and I pay them back
with yoor life.
But kill that tiger . . . I can't doo that.
Not even for yoo.

(Mowgli steps away, stunned by all this)

MOWGLI: This is
feeer
I guess.
Huh?

Grow up a wulf,
whole jungal is my big friend,
till all uv a sudden I'm no wulf,
I'm no baare,
I'm not even a silly stinky monkey.
What am I?
Some hoooman with no fur?
Where do hooomans live?

BALOO: Manvillage. At the edge uv the jungal.

MOWGLI: Will they protect me?

BALOO: Don't know.

MOWGLI: They have to.
Wet dark jungal is all my enemy,
all ambush and teeth and tiger.
Hooomans have to protect me!

(Mowgli runs off. Bagheera starts to follow; Baloo blocks him)

BALOO: Bagheera!
This time I tell yoo:
let him go.

BAGHEERA: *(looks after Mowgli, then back at Baloo; plaintive)* Will he come back?

BALOO: It's up to him.

(Chil the vulture caws in the distance)

No need to leave Akela for that vulture.
The River will take his body.

(Baloo picks Akela up by the feet, carries him away over his back. Bagheera still looks after Mowgli; then follows Baloo off.

Mowgli enters opposite, skulking about.)

MOWGLI: This whole manvillage is like
one big panther cage.

(Noises off. Mowgli hides, watches as Humans enter, leading Elephant. The robotlike Humans wear neutral masks; they carry whips, snapping them at the elephant to goad him into place. Elephant is also led by rope, which they tie to a tree. One of the whips gets snapped too close to the elephant's face; the elephant panics, skitters. Humans snap whips, taunt elephant to get him to stay still; elephant grows more frightened as they taunt, till elephant screams -- a big scream made of two voices)

MOWGLI: *(jumps out)* Leave him alone!

(He leaps toward the Humans, waving his arms and screaming monkeylike to scare them. They are taken aback by this wild creature, but they try to fend him off with their whips. Mowgli grabs the whips out of their hands, shouting. He snaps at the humans who turn and clipclop terrified offstage. Mowgli hurls the whips after them. Turns to the elephant, who is staring at him oddly)

MOWGLI: You're safe. They're gone.

HATHI the ELEPHANT: (doublevoice scream)
WHOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOre YOOOOOOO?

MOWGLI: *(jumping back)* One blood, you and me!

HATHI: Jungaltalk!
WHAAAAAAAAAAAAT AAAAAAArrr YOOOOOOO?

MOWGLI: I'm Mowgli the wulf.

HATHI: DOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOONT
gimme that.

You're no wulf. What are ya?
Yer sure funny-lookin.

MOWGLI: What're yoo?

HATHI: *(proud)* I'm Hathi the Elephant.
You never seen an elephant?

MOWGLI: Only in the jungal.

HATHI: I didn't know little boys lived in the jungal.

MOWGLI; I'm no boy. Have yoo even been
to the jungal?

HATHI: BEEEEN THERE?
My father's father's father MAAAAAAADE the jungal, boy.
PULLED the jungal owt uv the ground with his trunk
DUG with his TUSK to make rivers
STRUCK with his foot to make ponds and trees.
I am LOOOOOOORD uv the jungal,
boy.

MOWGLI: If yoo're Lord uv the Jungal,
how come yoo're trapped to that treee?

HATHI: *(hesitates; gestures after humans)* Humans.

MOWGLI: *(looking after them, astonished)* Those
are hoomans?

HATHI: Trapped me in the jungal when I was
no bigger than yoo.
Brought whips, brought this, *(pulls at rope with his neck)*
made me
carry their wood.

MOWGLI: Those ugly silly animals
arr hoooomans?

Well I'm not one uv them. *(imitates their robot walk)*

HATHI: Yoo look like them.
They forget
whooo I am.
But I don't forget.
I will leave this human place
and go back to the jungal
before I die.

MOWGLI; How do they keep yoo here?

HATHI: With this. *(Hathi strains at the rope)*

MOWGLI: Well I'm no human. *(He goes to fiddle with the rope)*

HATHI: What're yoo doing?

(With one or two tugs, Mowgli figures out how the slipknot works; he takes the rope off Hathi's neck, stands holding it.)

MOWGLI: See?
Humans trap yoo. I'm Mowgli
and I set yoo free.
I'm no human.
Yoo can go back to the jungal now.

(Hathi steps away, awkward; twists neck; staggers away and stares at Mowgli, amazed)

HATHI: What are yoo, anyway?
Yoo look just like'em, but yoo set me freee.
Yoo say yoo're not human
but yoo know how to use rope.

MOWGLI: What's rope?

HATHI: Yoo're holding it in yoor fingers.

MOWGLI: This is rope?

HATHI; Fingers, skin, eyes; ya use the rope.
Sorry, boy. Yoo're human.
and stuck with it.

(Mowgli stands staring at the rope)

HATHI: I owe you my freedom.
Yoo got enemies?
I'll step on'em for ya.

MOWGLI: *(slow)* No.
I take care uv my own
enemies.
From now on.

HATHI: Okay then. *(turns to go, stops, turns back)*
Good hunting,
jungal boy.

MOWGLI: Good hunting,
Lord uv the Jungal.

(Hathi gives a final trumpet shriek, exits. Mowgli looks at know on tree; fiddles with it, unties it, throws rope over his shoulder. Carries it off as he exits.

As Mowgli circles around behind the set, jungal sounds arise from offstage, and the River unfurls in front; when Mowgli comes back around, he is in the Jungal. Mowgli kneels at the River. Bends down, cups hands, drinks/touches lips to fabric.

Behind, enter Kaa. Mowgli turns quickly, sees Kaa. Kaa writhes sensuously, dancing slowly, not especially noticing Mowgli)

KAA: Yyaaaaa shhhhh sssss

MOWGLI: One blood,
you and me.

KAA: *(draws up startled; seess the boy, continues dancing)* Sssss!
Mannnnling.
Sssssssmmmmmmmmmelll
watrrrrrr
Is watrrrrrr
goooooood?

MOWGLI;: Water is good,
what there is uv it.

KAA: Watrrrr
is in the air.
Sssssssmmmelll!
Look up!

MOWGLI: *(looks up)* Clouds!

KAA: Claaaowwwds.
sss
full uv rayyyyn
dripfullll
sssss
Kaaaaaa
will make
rayyyynnn

MOWGLI: Yoo
will bring rain?

KAA: Kaaaa
will daance
daaaaaaaaaaaansssssss
at the top
uv the mowntayn
and make
rayyyyn.

MOWGLI: Soon?

KAA: Nowww.
Rayyyn
will covrrr the mowntayn
and choke the riverrrrr
when Kaaa
danssss esss
MOWGLI: The rain will flood this river?

KAA: Kaaa
will danssssss
and the River
will rise
to draaaown
bear and elephant and giraffe
if they stand in its paaaath.
When Kaa
daaaans esss
atop
the mowntayn
Yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa shhhhhhhhhhh sssssssssssssssss

(Kaa circles behind the set, still writhing; climbs up the rear of the set very slowly, almost imperceptibly, throughout the following scenes.

Mowgli inspects the area; stands thinking. Tugs at the foot of a tree, then sits, thinking, looking at the rope. Bagheera enters behind him silently)

BAGHEERA: *(slowly)* The humans
won't help yoo?

MOWGLI: *(rises to meet him)* No.
Nobody helps me
more than yoo.

And yoo've done all yoo can.

BAGHEERA: I have decided.
Yoo can stay in the jungal
and be safe.
I will kill Sherakhan.
I'll hunt him and jump on his back
and kill him.
Than you can stay.

MOWGLI: What about the Law?

BAGHEERA: Law's not the only master in the Jungal.
I will leave the jungal if I have to
or die, or be punished.
But I will kill Sherakhan
and yoo will stay.

MOWGLI: I owe my life to you.
I owe yoo more than I can pay back
ever.
I'll face the tiger myself.

BAGHEERA: Yoo're just a cub.

MOWGLI: Yoo
belong in the jungal.
More than me.
I will face Sherakhan.

(Mowgli picks up the rope. Bagheera leaps away, tense at the sight of it. Mowgli kneels, ties one end of the rope to the foot of a tree.)

BAGHEERA: *(hissing)* No one in this jungal uses that.

MOWGLI: *(calm, still tying rope)* No one's able to use it.
But me. I have fingers. See?
I have human eyes. And skin.

Makes me different, for all time.
And makes this rope mine.

BAGHEERA: Law as old as
human kind
says
when manthing enters the jungal,
animals must disappear
for their lives.
You can't live in this jungal
if yoo use
that.

(Silence. Mowgli is finished tying the rope, leaving the rest with the lasso coiled inconspicuous behind the tree. Stands now to face Bagheera.)

MOWGLI: I know.

(Pause.)

BAGHEERA: I will be close by.

(Bagheera stalks away. Mowgli looks around once more. He goes to the river, sits beside it. Relaxes, looking at us. Begins to sing, carelessly, in a cheerful tune which belies the words. Sings overloud, for distant ears)

MOWBLI: Before the peacock flutters
before the monkees cry
before the vulture swoops a furlong clear,
through the Jungal very softlee flits a shadow and a sigh --
he is fear, O little hunter, He is Fear.

(stops, listens a moment; continues)

Very softly down the glade
runs a waiting watching shade
and the whissper spreads and widens far and near;

and the sweat is on the brow
for he passes even now --
he is fear, o little hunter, he is Fear . . .

(Sherakhan has entered behind him. The tiger stalks on ready to spring; but seeing the boy's helpless posture, stops, chuckles)

SHERAKHAN: I seee
your protectors
sleeep,
Manling.
Yoo and I arr alone.

(Mowgli turns, casually; rises to face the tiger, though some distance away, and always between the tiger and the unseen rope)

MOWGLI: *(friendly)* Welcome,
Murderer.

SHERAKHAN: We all murderrr, Manling.

MOWGLI: *(still calm)* Yoo murderrred Akela
on his homeground.

SHERAKHAN: All grownd is hunting ground for me.

MOWGLI: Yoo did not kill for food
but for revenge
and for sport
and for the pleasure uv killing.
Only the coward Tiger
breaks Jungal law.

SHERAKHAN: Jungal Law is made
to keep safe old bears
and young foolish manboys.
I am Sherakhan the Tiger:
I ask no safety uv law

nor do I give it.

MOWGLI: Do you respect the Water Truce
by this River?

SHERAKHAN: *(chuckling)* Baloo your bumblebear is farrr away
with his laws and troooces.
My stomach
has growled
ten seasons for yoo.
No speech saves yoo now.

MOWGLI: I must dance my death then.

(Mowgli starts hopping, dancing, skipping about. Sherakhan puzzles. Mowgli skips close to him, past him; Sherakhan makes a grab, misses because he cannot turn as fast as Mowgli. Mowgli smiles. Sherakhan laughs, revolving to watch Mowgli dance.)

SHERAKHAN: Run, boy,
climb.
Run, and I catch yoo.
Climb, I catch yoo.
Swimm, I catch yoo.
But runn, dooo runnn.
I enjoy the sport.

(Mowgli slows, stops, standing before the tree under which the rope is coiled. He lets out a breath, sinks to his knees as if exhausted)

MOWGLI: Yoo are right.
I have from yoo
ten years uv life.
I can run no longer.
Will you have mercy on me,
O terribal Sherakhan?

SHERAKHAN: I have hunting to finish tonight.
Yoo weary me.

(Mowgli has gripped the rope behind him, now stands, steps toward the tiger)

MOWGLI: Take me then
and
CHOKE!

(Sherakhan leaps; Mowgli leaps to meet him, noose out, straight at the tiger; slips the rope over Sherakhan's head as he ducks down under the tiger's too-high swing, scurries past and away before the tiger can turn. Sherakhan jumps after him, away from the bars; the loop tightens round his neck. Pulls angrily. Mowgli stands out of reach. Tiger rages, growls.)

SHERAKHAN: No goooooood,
clevrrrrrr mannboy.
I chew through this vine
and run yooooooo
down!

MOWGLI: Will you? Look then!

(Points up to where Kaa has reached the top of the bars; Kaa begins to dance. Thunder)

MOWGLI: See where Kaa daaaaaansssses
atop the mowntayn?

(Mowgli laughs and dances. The tiger is hypnotized)

MOWGLI: Hear, Sherakhan?
Rain?
Have yoo seen the rise uv this river?
When the new rain
floods off the mowntayn?

(Mowgli climbs a tree out of reach, shouts over the thunder)

MOWGLI: Have you drunk tonight?
Drink yoor fill,
Sherakhan!

(The River starts rippling, breaking Sherakhan out of his trance. He runs, tugs at the rope, tries to climb: the rope holds him back. Claws at it: his paws can't quite reach the neck. Lurches, hurts his neck, struggles snarling left and right. The River is rippling higher and higher. Sherakhan hurls himself at the tree, staggers back, stands, raises two paws, roars loud and long -- till the River fabric snaps up high in the air, covering the tiger from sight.

Kaa's dance has ended: the snake leaves. The fabric floats down descending slowly, till the River settles to level, subsides. The Tiger has disappeared.

The thunder has stopped. Distant howl of wolves.)

GRAB & GREY: *(off)* Sherakhan! Sherakhan!

(wolves enter)

GREY: Sherakhan!

GRAB: Save us from the thunder!

(Mowgli jumps down, faces the wolves)

MOWGLI: I AM SHERAKHAN!

(Bagheera has entered with Baloo,watching. Mowgli is breathing hard and fast, pacing catlike with bared teeth)

MOWGLI: Master uv the Jungal,

me, Sherakhan!
I kill, I eat, I murder where I please!
I rip the Jungal with my teeth,
I crush the sky with my jaw!
Sherakhan!
Hyenas and dogs
follow me, lick my feet for scraps.
Dogs! Fangmouth dogs with lolling tongues
I'll slash with my talon!
Sherakhan!

(Leaps at the wolves, swinging fists over head like a little boy trying to fight. Grab and Grey are terrified; they run off. Mowgli stops, panting, wild-eyed)

MOWGLI: I am Sherakhan
and the ants at the bottom uv the river
have my hide for a gift.
Sherakhan!

(Sees Baloo and Bagheera; he attacks them, leaping and clawing. Bagheera fends him off, Baloo catches and hugs him. He beats furiously at Baloo; stops hands to head, eyes clenched tight shut)

MOWGLI: Ww
what
is it --
Bahloo
Bagheera, help me . . .
am I dying?
Some insect is stinging my eyes.

BALOO: Yoo make tears.
ears like men use.

MOWGLI: The jungal hurts me
but I don't want to leave it.
I'm two Mowglis.

BALOO: Mann goes to mann.
Let them fall, Mowgli.
They arr only tears.

MOWGLI: I broke the Law.
Used manthing.
Dost the jungal cast me out?

BALOO: Yoo killed the Tiger
No one but Mowgli commands Mowgli now.

MOWBLI: I'll stay then.
Can I stay?

BALOO: Stay
if yoo can.
But the jungal is full uv wulfs
and tigers.
Will yoo spend yoor life
killing them all with rope
just to show yoo belong heer?

MOWGLI: Bagheera?
Yoo bought my life from the Pack.
Yoo are Master uv the Jungal.
Will yoo command me to stay?

BAGHEERA: *(head is bowed)* When I was grown
the cage uv my youth
could not hold me.
Yoo are grown
now
Little Brother.
This Jungal
uv yoor youth
cannot hold yoo.
Bahloo knows more than I do
and his woord

is my woord.
By the bull that bought yoo
I set yoo free.

(Bagheera steps away, facing away from them. Mowgli looks after him, then down)

MOWGLI: I'll live in that village then.
But I'll never be human like them.
I am Mowgli
and the Jungal is my home.

BALOO: No more to say.
Just hold a thought
at night
sometimes
for this fatt
old baaare.

MOWGLI: I will.
Bagheera?

(Bagheera can't speak, can't look at him. Mowgli waits for an answer; then turns away, dries eyes. Walks away. Only when Mowgli is almost off does Bagheera speak, painfully, without turning)

BAGHEERA: *(can hardly bear to say these words)* Remember
Bagheera!

(still can't look at Mowgli; steps farther away)

BAGHEERA: Remember
Bagheera loved yoo!
Good hunting on a new trail.

(another step away)

Remember Bagheera!

(The panther leaps off and is gone. Mowgli looks after him; turns; leaves the jungal. Baloo watches him go.)

BALOO: *(after he is gone)* One blood
you and me.

(The words 'one blood, yoo and me' are taken up in whispers by the whole cast. The chanting of the words grows as Baloo turns, walks off. Chanting modulates to chattering, cawing, snarling. Jungalsounds loud for a moment; then quick silence.)

END